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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5596
INFO RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI IMMEDIATE 3143
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE
RUEHAK/TSR ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T ANKARA 000506

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PM/RSAT FOR DOWLEY, MP/DTCC FOR WATKINS, ISN/CATR FOR
MALZAHN, EUR/SE FOR GOODMAN, EUR/CARC FOR BENNETT, EUR/PRA
FOR PUCKETT AND HARDIMAN, T FOR KATSAPIS,

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/14/2018

TAGS: ETTC GG MAS PARM PGOV PREL TU

SUBJECT: TURKEY: MFA STOPS M72 LAW TRANSFER/SALE TO GEORGIA

REF: A. ANKARA 380

¶B. STATE 17964

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor Carl Siebentritt, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (U) This is an action request. Please see para. 4.

¶12. (S) Following up on ref a demarche on the potential transfer of U.S.-origin M72 light antitank weapons to Georgia (ref b), MFA Department Head for Caucasus Affairs Firat Sunel told us on March 13 that the GOT interagency investigation into the case has been completed. Sunel confirmed that the transfer has not taken place, and stated that the MFA has decided to oppose the transaction due to concerns that such a transaction might exacerbate already high tensions in Georgia. Sunel said that during meetings with the Ministry of Defense, MKEK representatives, and the Turkish General Staff, it was unclear whether the equipment in question was of U.S. origin or produced under license in Turkey by MKEK. Sunel asked whether we have additional information on when the equipment might have originally been transferred to Turkey or whether the US ever granted a license for MKEK to produce the equipment. We confirmed our understanding that the USG has no records of MKEK receiving a license to produce the equipment, and agreed to check whether we have records of when the equipment was originally transferred to Turkey.

¶13. (S) We reminded Sunel that the US was not opposed to the sales of arms to Georgia in principle, only to the transfer of U.S.-origin equipment to a third party without prior USG consent. Sunel took the point, but reiterated Turkey's decision not to go forward with the transfer. We asked Sunel to keep us apprised of any changes in the MFA's position on this transaction.

¶14. (S) Action Request: Request Department provide post information, if available, on when ref b equipment was originally transferred to Turkey. End Action Request.

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WILSON